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Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme
131st meeting
Nairobi, 16 June 2015

Draft minutes of the 130th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme, held on 31 March 2015

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The meeting was opened at 9.45 a.m. on Tuesday, 31 March 2015, by Mr. Sunu Soemarno, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP.

2. The meeting was attended by 106 participants representing 66 members and 1 observer mission, as well as 8 participants from relevant international non-governmental organizations and international organizations.

3. The Chair welcomed the participation at the current meeting of the members of the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP, stating that the Bureau had met in Nairobi to discuss preparations for the second session of the Environment Assembly, to be held in May 2016.

4. Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren, President of the Environment Assembly, expressed appreciation on behalf of the Bureau of the Assembly for the opportunity to attend the current meeting. She said that Bureau members had worked to bring the outcome of the first session of the Environment Assembly to other forums and to make preparations for the second session. The Bureau had met in Nairobi on 30 March 2015 with members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the chairs of Nairobi-based regional groups to exchange views on the political objectives of and expectations for the second session, and to brainstorm on a possible theme, or a maximum of two themes, for the high-level segment of the session. Bilateral informal consultations had also been held with a number of members of the Committee to discuss a possible way forward on outstanding issues regarding the stakeholder engagement policy. The Bureau would resume its discussions after the closure of the current meeting.

5. Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, welcomed participants and said that the discussions held by Bureau the previous day had been extremely encouraging.

6. The Chair welcomed the following new members of the Committee: Mr. Pavel Řezáč, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic; Ms. Majaana Lina Sall, Acting Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the European Union; Mr. Hanan Goder, Chargé d'Affaires and Permanent Representative of Israel; Mr. Quasai Rahed Alfarhan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Kuwait; Mr. Abdoul Wahab Haidara, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Senegal; Ms. Koleka Anita Mqulwana, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of South Africa; Mr. Abdulmonem Annan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative

of the Syrian Arab Republic, based in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania; and Ms. Asma Mubarak Amber, Deputy Permanent Representative of Yemen.

7. He bade farewell to the following departing members, thanking them for their contribution to the work of the Committee: Mr. Lodewijk Briët, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the European Union; Mr. Sándor Kocsis, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Hungary; Mr. Shalom Charles Cohen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Israel; Mr. Momar Gueye, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Senegal; Mr. Jeffrey Cernyar, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America; and Mr. Munir Ahmed Mohammed Ghalieb, Deputy Permanent Representative of Yemen.

8. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CRP/130/1).

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the minutes of the 129th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 13 January 2015

9. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 129th meeting on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/130/2).

Agenda item 3

Report by the Executive Director to the Committee of Permanent Representatives

10. Introducing the item, the Executive Director drew attention to his written report, entitled "Executive Director's update to the Committee of Permanent Representatives," which, he said, included highlights of UNEP activities undertaken since the 129th meeting of the Committee, but not those carried out after the release of the report, on which he would brief the Committee orally. He highlighted activities associated with four major events that he said made 2015 the year of multilateralism and sustainable development: the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015; the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Addis Ababa in July 2015; the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, to be held in New York in September 2015; and the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris in December 2015.

11. The decisions adopted at the above-mentioned meetings would have significant implications for the United Nations as a whole as member States turned their attention to implementing them in 2016, and UNEP senior management had discussed the possible need to review the UNEP programme of work and medium-term strategy to ensure they were aligned with priorities emerging from those decisions.

12. The Sendai conference had been a success and, thanks to UNEP efforts, the environmental dimension of disaster risk reduction, including the role of ecosystem resilience in mitigating the risks and impacts of disasters, had been at the centre of discussions at the conference. Through its Finance Initiative, UNEP had also facilitated the launch in Sendai of a new insurance industry initiative, "United for disaster resilience," and the signing by major insurance companies of a statement in support of disaster risk reduction.

13. Concerning the post-2015 development agenda, significant progress had been achieved over the previous two months, particularly with regard to targets and indicators that would enable parties to monitor progress in the implementation of the sustainable development goals at the national and international levels. Member States were working with the United Nations Statistical Commission. The draft sustainable development goals submitted by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals would likely be adopted, but discussions continued on the ideal number and complexity of proposed targets and the need for targets and indicators that were consistent with an integrated approach and were underpinned by data that countries could effectively collect and measure.

14. Regarding the third International Conference on Financing for Development, a draft outcome document had been produced in preparation for the conference. Significant work remained to be done, however, on issues such as the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which was inextricably linked to the post-2015 development agenda and the climate negotiations and, if not addressed, risked derailing progress toward reaching agreement under the two processes.

15. With regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the eighth part of the second session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action had been held in Geneva in February 2015 and an initial draft for a new climate agreement had been produced. The lengthy draft revealed that considerable work was required before the Paris meeting, but also that Governments were moving toward a new agreement that could help set the world on a path toward staying within a 2-degree Celsius warming above pre-industrial temperatures by accelerating current efforts to tackle climate change, among other things.

16. The 2015 edition of *Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment*, to be released by UNEP and a number of partners, showed that in 2014 renewable energy investments, excluding large hydropower projects, had exceeded $270 billion, representing a 17 per cent increase from 2013 in spite of the financial crisis and a drastic reduction in the price of fossil fuels. Close to 50 per cent of those investments had been made in developing and emerging economies, including not only China but also African countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco and South Africa, which had invested between $0.5 billion and $1 billion dollars in renewable energy in 2014. Recent Government statements suggested that the upward trend would continue. For instance, India had announced that it would deploy over 100,000 megawatts (MW) in photovoltaic capacity over the following four to five years; as a reference point, total installed capacity in Kenya was 1,400 MW. In South Africa, $14 billion had been mobilized for wind and solar technology since 2011, most of it through domestic investments and financial and capital markets, and the country was on the verge of seeing a levelling of the cost of wind-powered electricity generation with that of coal-fired electricity generation. These figures showed that the Framework Convention on Climate Change had prompted Governments, markets, investors and technology companies to move forward in tackling climate change.

17. In addition to accelerated investments in renewable energy, achieving a carbon-neutral world economy during the second half of the current century would require advancing the energy efficiency agenda and increasing the capacity of countries to sequester carbon through the restoration of forests, soils and coastal zones. In February, UNEP had accompanied the President of France and four of his cabinet members to the Philippines, a country that had suffered the consequences of devastating natural disasters and had taken remarkable steps to respond to climate change; it had invested tens of millions of dollars in building infrastructure and ecosystem resilience, for instance through mangrove rehabilitation and reforestation, and was currently the second largest producer of geothermal energy.

18. He drew attention to the launch at the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), held in Cairo from 2 to 6 March 2015, of a new African network of women ministers and leaders for the environment and the release of a number of publications, including the *Africa Mountains Atlas*, the *Africa's Adaptation Gap 2* report, which conveyed the message that ignoring adaptation in the new global climate agreement would constitute a grave error, *Building Inclusive Green Economies in Africa*, a report on lessons learned from work conducted in Africa on the green economy between 2010 and 2015, and a *Green Economy Scoping Study for Egypt*.

19. Other highlights included the mobilization of public-private partnerships on climate and air pollution and the ramping up of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy; a meeting of Green Growth Knowledge Platform partners on how fiscal policy reforms might support the transition towards a green economy; continued progress under the UNEP inquiry into the design of a sustainable financial system, an initiative launched in 2014 to study how specific countries were financing the green economy, with a final report to be released by the end of 2015; the dissemination of the outcome of the first session of the Environment Assembly on the illegal trade in wildlife, including during the World Wildlife day celebrations, which together with an international conference held in Kasane, Botswana, in March 2015, had helped to raise the profile of the issue; the convening by the Secretary-General of a policy committee comprising members from UNEP and other partners tasked with implementing a strategy to help countries to tackle the illegal trade in wildlife more proactively; the provision of support to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in preparing a report on the nexus between natural resources exploitation, illegal trade and conflict; the first meeting of authors of the first Global Gender and Environment Outlook, to be launched in 2016; the launch of the UNEP *Our Planet* and 2014 annual reports; and the provision of support to the secretariat of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants to ensure that the back-to-back meetings of the conferences of the parties to the three conventions, to be held in May 2015, were a success.

20. The work of UNEP and the decisions adopted by the Environment Assembly at its first session had had an impact on other forums as well. For instance, marine litter and resource efficiency had been

included as themes in the agenda of the Group of Seven summit to be held in June 2015, and UNEP had been invited to attend a meeting to be held in Moscow in April 2015 at which the green economy and its relevance to emerging economies would be discussed in preparation for the Seventh Summit of Heads of State and Government of Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (BRICS).

21. In closing, the Executive Director thanked Italy for its offer to host World Environment Day 2015 in Milan. He announced the appointment of Ms. Megumi Seki as Deputy Executive Secretary of the Ozone Secretariat and of Ms. Dionyssia Geka as Deputy Director of the UNEP Office for Operations.

22. The deployment of Umoja, which represented the largest administrative reform undertaken by the United Nations Secretariat in many years, would be completed on 10 June 2015, so no transactions would be processed electronically between 15 May and 14 June 2015. UNEP had introduced the International Public Sector Accounting Standards to the Nairobi duty station in 2014, but was still working to produce auditable accounts. The 2014 annual report did not, therefore, include financial figures and should be seen as an advance version of the report. Despite this delay, preliminary figures suggested that UNEP had performed well in 2014 and that its financial outlook remained very positive.

23. Following the report by the Executive Director, Mr. Mahmoud Samir Samy, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister of Egypt and Vice-President of the Environment Assembly, gave a presentation on the main outcomes of the fifteenth session of AMCEN.

24. In the discussion that followed, most of the representatives who spoke thanked the Executive Director for his written report and oral briefing, with one also thanking Mr. Samy for his presentation.

25. One representative lamented that documents considered at the current meeting contained acronyms that had not been spelled out and were not available in all six of the official languages of the United Nations, which limited the ability of some members to participate effectively in the work of the Committee.

26. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic thanked UNEP for activities it had undertaken in his country, but said that crippling economic sanctions imposed on his country were hindering the implementation of environmental and other projects and impeding the transfer of contributions to UNEP and other bodies.

27. Three representatives, one of them speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that it was essential that the decisions adopted by the Environment Assembly at its first session be implemented, with two suggesting that UNEP provide a detailed progress report on their implementation to the Committee at its meetings in June and late 2015. One said that it was crucial that member States recognize the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in the climate negotiations.

28. Drawing attention to the written report by the Executive Director, the representative of Japan announced that his country would host the technical support unit for the Asia-Pacific regional assessment to be developed under the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. He commended UNEP for organizing the first global adaptation network forum in Panama City, stating that his country had offered to help developing countries to produce climate impact assessments, which were essential for developing national and local adaptation action plans. Regarding disaster risk reduction, the conference held in Sendai had been a success, resulting in the adoption of a political declaration and a new framework for disaster risk reduction for 2015–2030. On chemicals and waste, he said that an inception and capacity-building workshop on national and city waste management strategies in Africa had been held by UNEP, and he thanked UNEP for recognizing the International Environmental Technology Centre as a global centre of excellence in waste management, stating that his Government would continue to support the Centre's activities and expected UNEP to continue to support the expansion of such activities, in collaboration with relevant international agencies and frameworks, so as to improve their effectiveness and efficiency, not only in Asia but also in Africa and Latin America.

29. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the launch by UNEP at the World Economic Forum meeting in January 2015 of a progress report under its inquiry into the design of a sustainable financial system and called for updates on UNEP activities regarding green financing and green fiscal reforms at the next subcommittee meeting. He queried the status of the implementation of paragraph 21 of Environment Assembly resolution 1/5 on chemicals and waste, concerning the role of the World Health Organization in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. He also asked that the progress report on the work of the task team on the effectiveness of administrative arrangements and programmatic cooperation between UNEP and UNEP-administered convention secretariats, to be provided to the conferences of the parties to the

Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions at their meetings in May 2015, be shared with the Committee.

30. Another representative expressed satisfaction at the success of the third session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the third annual conference of the Green Growth Knowledge Platform, the latter of which, he said, had confirmed the experience of his country that economic instruments were effective not only in reducing environmental and human health impacts but also in promoting innovation and new business models and investments that could generate new green jobs.

31. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the report of the Executive Director and commended the involvement of UNEP in ongoing processes, including discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, sustainable development goals, preparations for the third International Conference on Financing for Development, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change. He stressed the need to fully preserve the intergovernmental nature and openness and transparency of the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. He commended UNEP for initiating timely discussions on preparations for the second session of the Environment Assembly; ministers participating should give political and strategic guidance to UNEP on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The broadest possible participation of all member States in preparations for the second session was very important, particularly with regard to the elaboration of the medium-term strategy and the programme of work and budget.

32. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the coming months would be critical to building the new architecture for sustainable development and UNEP involvement in processes such as the climate and post-2015 development agenda negotiations was welcome, as was its role in helping to define indicators for the sustainable development goals. He requested UNEP to provide regular updates to the Committee on its activities on indicators, and asked whether UNEP membership in the inter-agency and expert group on sustainable development goal indicators had been confirmed. He welcomed the steps taken thus far on the UNEP medium-term strategy, as well as its plan to develop a long-term vision to 2030, which would strengthen results-based management and lead to a more strategic medium-term strategy and programme of work. He suggested that both the medium-term strategy and long-term vision fully take into account the sustainable development goals. Together with another representative, he expressed the hope that the draft UNEP medium-term strategy and programme of work would be available for consideration by the subcommittee at its annual meeting in October 2015. Regarding the preparations for the second session of the Assembly, he welcomed the early preparations for the session, including the meetings held by the Bureau and the joint meetings of the bureaux of the Assembly and the Committee.

33. Concerning Umoja, two representatives, one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, took note of the blackout period and commended UNEP on its efforts to implement the enterprise resource planning system, with one stating that the transition to Umoja was a revolutionary reform that was bound to present growing challenges as implementation progressed, but in the end would bring unprecedented transparency, accountability and efficiency to implementing entities.

34. With regard to the annual report, two representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that they looked forward to reviewing the final version of the report, including financial data.

35. Reacting to the Executive Director's remarks concerning renewable energy investments, one representative informed the meeting of the recent increase in his country of total photovoltaic installed capacity, and that of the number of people with access to electricity, which was an indication of dedicated efforts to provide energy, and specifically green energy, to all.

36. Responding to comments, the Executive Director said that the International Environmental Technology Centre dealt with a range of waste-related issues, including waste-to-energy and electronic waste matters, and the workshop held in Nairobi in March 2015 had emphasized its global nature. Country requests for UNEP work in the field of chemicals and waste were growing exponentially; UNEP was unable to respond to all such requests but was building partnerships with other organizations and networks of practitioners to tackle chemicals and waste issues, including through the Centre. In view of the number of member State requests, UNEP management had agreed that the chemicals and waste subprogramme would receive greater support in the future.

37. Concerning the implementation of decisions adopted by the Environment Assembly at its first session, UNEP would provide a detailed update to the Committee on the issue in its programme performance report and at the Committee meeting in June, at which it would also report on its work on the green economy. With respect to Environment Assembly resolution 1/5, he had written to the

Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) to request that WHO assume a more proactive role in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. WHO had not been able to respond positively owing to financial cuts and the outbreak of Ebola virus disease in West Africa. UNEP and WHO continued to cooperate closely on work on lead, mercury and endocrine disruptors, but Committee members were encouraged to convey to the World Health Assembly, at its meeting in May 2015, the need for WHO to engage more actively in the agenda of the Strategic Approach, as well as in the Climate and Clean Air Coalition and on issues such as indoor and outdoor air pollution.

38. In closing, he said that UNEP was examining the possibility of mobilizing international support to, at a minimum, double Africa's deployment of renewable energy infrastructure between 2016 and 2020, given the momentum generated by current efforts, stating that Africa presented a unique opportunity for advancing the energy and climate agendas and transforming any climate commitments made in Paris in December 2015 into tangible action.

Agenda item 4

Briefing on preparations for the sixth Global Environment Outlook report

39. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat provided an overview of the preparations for the sixth Global Environment Outlook report (GEO-6) (UNEP/CPR/130/4). She drew attention to the recent meetings of the scientific advisory panel and the high-level intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder group established to provide guidance and support in the elaboration of the report. At their meetings, held in Nairobi, the two bodies had endorsed the process of generating six regional assessments to feed into the global assessment and discussed scientific aspects, as well as organizational and modality issues, underlining the role of the panel in ensuring scientific credibility. She underscored the rigorous peer review process put in place to ensure scientific plausibility, which drew on that of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the guidance of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. The process encouraged the inclusion of indigenous, local knowledge as called for in resolution 1/10 of the United Nations Environment Assembly. Further details on the work of the assessment methodologies, data and information working group, the draft timetable for the process, and revised budgetary information would be made available in due course.

40. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives expressed appreciation for the briefing and satisfaction with the work of UNEP on the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) process, and welcomed the progress made in the preparatory meetings for GEO-6 that had taken place.

41. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, called for further consideration of how the GEO-6 process was linked to the environmental dimension of the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, and highlighted the need to ensure maximum visibility of GEO-6, in particular the summary for policymakers. He sought further information on the content of the regional and global assessments and their target audiences, the timetable for the process, and the data policy of UNEP, notably the Programme's access to information policy; and he requested regular updates for the Committee on the process.

42. Another representative voiced strong support for UNEP as a knowledge provider, emphasizing its mandate to keep the global environment under review and communicate findings to experts and decision makers, which was the purpose of the GEO process. He expressed support for the regional approach, which would increase the relevance of GEO-6 and enhance ownership of the report. He noted the need to avoid overlap with existing assessment processes, for example on climate change, biodiversity and oceans, and called for the report to pay particular attention to emerging issues and to address environmental challenges in an integrated manner.

43. He stressed the importance of transparent procedures in the GEO-6 process with regard to the selection of teams for the work and the review and approval processes; conflicts of interest should be addressed openly. The process should be in line with the decisions of the Environment Assembly and the report and the summary for policymakers should be launched at a major global event, such as a session of the Environment Assembly, to ensure maximum attention. Follow-up outreach activities should be conducted and sufficient resources allocated to communicating the findings of the report.

44. One representative welcomed the decision to take a bottom-up assessment approach and release regional assessment reports separately. He stressed the importance of ensuring the credibility of data and the conclusions of the report, in order for the UNEP flagship project to be widely recognized by the international community as providing a relevant policy reference for environmental decision-making.

45. One representative welcomed the participation of a greater number of scientists from different countries in the GEO-6 process. Noting that the GEO process should strengthen the capacity of developing countries to generate and manage environmental information, she called for further information on how the process would support capacity-building, especially at the national level.

46. Noting that the results of the regional assessments on the global environment would be presented to the Environment Assembly at its second session, one representative said that methodological criteria should be developed to ensure that GEO-6 was in line with the sustainable development goals and the responses required thereto.

47. Responding to the comments, the representative of the secretariat assured the Committee that regular updates on the process would be provided and the timetable published as soon as it was approved by the high-level intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder group. Regarding the data policy and access to information, she said that UNEP Live provided a platform for dialogue with all countries regarding the possibilities for the publication of information and identification of data provenance and its quality assurance; that also formed part of the capacity-building programme to enable countries to begin putting in place and implementing related policies. She said that a communication strategy was being developed as part of the process, embracing digital aspects, branding and outreach. In addition, at the request of the high-level group, an education process was being developed to focus on digital outreach; bilateral contacts between different groupings of experts; training programmes; and an internationally standardized manual of assessment methodologies which would be part of a major online open course similar to others being developed across UNEP to ensure the availability and accessibility of content. She noted that the GEO-6 products would be made available in the six official languages of the United Nations. With regard to conflicts of interest, the highest level of integrity would be required of experts and they would be asked individually to declare any possible conflict of interest. She assured the Committee that the GEO process would include a methodology to consider current goals, targets and indicators in the light of the future sustainable development goals, and to inform the discussions of the Environment Assembly and the direction of GEO.

Agenda item 5

Contribution of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to preparations for the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

48. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the expected contribution of the Committee to preparations for the second session of the Environment Assembly (UNEP/CPR/130/5). He called on the Committee at its current meeting and the subsequent meeting in June, first, to achieve a degree of consensus on the political objectives and expectations of the second session to feed into the Bureau discussions, including on the themes of the high-level segment of the session; second, to provide initial feedback on the provisional agenda and structure of the session; and third, to prepare for agreement on the agenda, structure and organization of work of the second open-ended meeting of the Committee and the regular meeting to be held in June. In order to achieve consensus and agreement, he further proposed the organization of two subcommittee meetings, to be held on 12 May and 4 June 2015, dedicated specifically to detailed discussion of the issues.

49. He proposed that at its current meeting the Committee should concentrate on the political objectives and expectations of the second session of the Assembly in order to take advantage of the attendance at the meeting of the Environment Assembly Bureau members.

50. Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren, President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, gave a presentation on the outcomes of the Bureau discussions held on 30 March 2015. The main points raised included the importance of focusing on the implementation of decisions and agreements made on the post-2015 development agenda; the need to concentrate on effective implementation of the decisions of the Environment Assembly at its first session; and the importance of the coherence of environmental activities at all levels and efficient coordination of environmental issues among different bodies of the United Nations system.

51. The Bureau had stressed the importance of focusing on the post-2015 development agenda and making the second session of the Assembly attractive in substance and format to Governments, major groups and stakeholders. The time frame of the session called for well-planned meetings and maximum use of the intersessional work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The Bureau had also urged that member States should not spend a long time negotiating a ministerial outcome document, but rather, such an outcome document should form a significant part of a package of outcomes, including strong resolutions and decisions. The proposed themes of the high-level segment would be discussed by the Committee at subsequent meetings and approved by the Bureau of the

Assembly in July 2015. The Bureau had also emphasized that the Assembly should provide a suitable platform for the engagement of major groups and stakeholders in dialogue with member States.

52. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives expressed appreciation for the presentation and thanked the members of the Bureau of the Assembly for their attendance at the present meeting. One representative said that their presence underlined the commitment of all countries to maintaining the momentum of the preparations and demonstrated the support that the Bureau could provide to the process. Another asked for the presentation by the President of the Assembly to be made available to the Committee members.

53. One representative considered that the overarching objective of the second session should be issues related to the governance of UNEP; its goal should be to determine how UNEP could assist member States in realizing their environmental priorities, as documented in the resolutions adopted by the Assembly. The medium-term strategy and programme of work and budget of UNEP should clearly demonstrate a focus on the previously expressed priorities of member States. The outcomes of the session should consist of agreed resolutions submitted by the member States and a road map for UNEP in the form of its medium-term strategy and programme of work and budget; and the outcome of the high-level segment should be a chair's summary rather than a ministerial outcome document, upon which on previous occasions it had been difficult to reach consensus. The high-level segment should allow for an in-depth exchange of views and should therefore be limited to one theme; the exchange of scripted speeches should be avoided and the Bureau should consider formats used in other forums that were conducive to meaningful discussions. With regard to the contribution of the Assembly to the post-2015 development agenda, the focus should be on the mandate and priorities of UNEP as agreed by member States and on aligning the ongoing activities of UNEP with the most relevant areas of the post-2015 development agenda. The Programme had an important role in implementing that agenda but should avoid pursuing new commitments in that regard. The Assembly should demonstrate in detail how the programme of work and priorities of its first session were being implemented. The second session was an important opportunity to highlight the work of UNEP, but the Programme should have a broader outreach strategy on an ongoing basis.

54. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, endorsed the need for various communication mechanisms to be employed to ensure the effective implementation of the decisions of the second session of the Environment Assembly. He also stressed the importance of discussing the issues of stakeholder participation and the rules of procedure as soon as possible and building consensus in the Committee so that the ministers taking part in the second session would be able to focus on environmental and not organizational issues. He welcomed the work of the Bureau to build bridges between the various positions.

55. A number of representatives stressed the importance of regional consultations on the draft decisions to be considered by the Assembly. One called on the regional groups to work together to reach consensus on stakeholder participation and the rules of procedure.

56. A number of representatives concurred that there should be one overarching theme for the high-level segment of the second session, and one said that there should be a new theme for every session of the Assembly. They called for agreement to be reached on the theme as soon as possible. Some said that it was important for the Assembly at its second session to follow up on the work at its first session and also to take account of the outcomes of major conferences taking place in 2015. One representative identified the key elements of the session of significance for the environment: interesting high-level dialogue; interactive and meaningful engagement with stakeholders, including the private sector; and side events and seminars to provide arenas for more specific in-depth discussions. One representative stressed the importance of the right balance between political topics relevant to national implementation and United Nations system-wide issues.

57. One representative said that the theme of the high-level discussions should focus on the challenges and implementation of the environmental dimension of the post-2015 agenda, in line with the role of UNEP as the leading global environmental authority. The emphasis should be on strategic elements such as coordination of environmental work in the United Nations system and strategic partnerships with United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and businesses. The theme of the high-level segment should also attract the interest of ministers and stimulate interactive discussion.

58. One representative supported the view that the outcome of the high-level segment should be in the form of a president's summary. He said that the situation at the first session of the Assembly, with drafting taking place during the session, should be avoided at all costs. Another said that the outcome document had to address the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

59. A number of representatives stressed the importance of the participation of major groups and stakeholders in the Assembly. Discussions should be open and inclusive, she said. However, the Environment Assembly was an intergovernmental organization and member States alone were able to take decisions. One representative said that one of the lessons learned from the first session of the Assembly was that it was necessary to have a normative framework, particularly with regard to procedure, and that it had to be clear and agreed before the start of the session. With regard to the organizational structure of the second session, it was important to reach agreement on the outstanding issue of stakeholder participation.

60. One representative considered that too many side events during the session posed difficulties for participants and diluted the theme of the session, and he called for them to be greatly reduced in number.

61. Two representatives considered that given the heavy agenda of the first session, maximum use should be made of the second open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in preparing for the session, and one suggested that parallel meetings would be needed.

62. Responding to the comments, the Executive Director assured the Committee that the Bureau of the Assembly and the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives were working well together in preparation for the second session. The President of the Environment Assembly noted that the Bureau members were required to act as a channel of communication back to their regions; in preparing for the second session, it was important to communicate the ideas and exchange of views emanating from meetings in Nairobi and to receive feedback from the regions throughout the preparatory process.

Agenda item 6

Report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

63. Introducing the item, the Chair drew the attention of the Committee to his report on the work of the subcommittee.

64. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, signalled the request for further discussion at a future date on improving the efficiency of the work of the Committee through its subcommittee, and on the work and organization of the annual subcommittee meeting.

65. The meeting took note of the report.

Agenda item 7

Other matters

66. No other matters were discussed.

Agenda item 8

Closure of the meeting

67. The meeting was declared closed at 1.10 p.m. on Tuesday, 31 March 2015.